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ENHANCING EFL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AND MOTIVATION THROUGH THE SQ3R METHOD: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method in a ninth-grade classroom at SMP Negeri 4 Rambang Niru, aiming to enhance both reading comprehension and student motivation. A total of 28 students participated in this classroom action research project, which spanned an academic semester. To evaluate the effectiveness of the SQ3R methodology, the research employed test cycle implementation for reading comprehension assessments, alongside a motivation questionnaire adapted from the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). This comprehensive approach allowed for a detailed examination of the interconnected variables of motivation and comprehension. The results indicated a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension abilities and a noticeable increase in motivation levels, with 85% of participants reporting enhanced interest in reading tasks. Furthermore, the findings illustrated that utilizing a structured approach like SQ3R not only deepened student engagement but also empowered learners to take ownership of their educational experiences. This aligns with existing literature underscoring the correlation between motivation and reading outcomes and suggests that motivated students generally display improved comprehension skills. The implications of this research emphasize the necessity for educators to integrate motivational techniques into reading instruction and suggest opportunities for further research across diverse educational contexts. Future studies may explore the long-term impacts of the SQ3R method on various age groups or demographic profiles, contributing to a broader understanding of its effectiveness in different learning environments.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Reading Comprehension, Secondary Education, SQ3R Method, Student Motivation

INTRODUCTION

For students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading comprehension is critically important for their academic success. However, many Indonesian junior high school students encounter significant challenges in understanding English texts due to a combination of factors, including a lack of effective reading strategies, diminished motivation, and limited vocabulary (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). For instance, students at SMPN

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4 Rambang Niru, which serves as the context for this study, struggle particularly with procedural texts, often finding themselves unable to identify key concepts or comprehend intricate details. This difficulty is particularly exacerbated by traditional teacher-centered approaches to instruction that do not provide students with structured reading methods or stimulate active participation (Brown, 2004; Manurung & Manurung, 2021).

As a result, there is a pressing need for more interactive and student-centered instructional strategies to bridge the gap between comprehension and motivation. Ahmadi (2017) emphasizes the strong correlation between reading success and motivation, illustrating that fostering an engaging learning environment can significantly enhance students' reading experiences. Recent studies underscore the efficacy of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method as a powerful tool for enhancing reading comprehension. For example, research by Sinulingga and Saragih (2023) demonstrates that the SQ3R approach significantly improves students' reading proficiency by facilitating structured engagement with texts. In another study, Wulandari (2023) confirmed that implementing the SQ3R method in experimental classroom settings led to marked improvements in reading comprehension outcomes. These findings align with Nabilla and Hadi Asmara (2022) and Soleha's (2021) observations, which noted increased student participation and positive reading outcomes when students utilized the SQ3R framework within structured literacy instruction.

Despite this growing body of literature indicating the potential benefits of the SQ3R method, there exists a notable gap in the application of this strategy among junior high school students in authentic classroom situations. Many current studies primarily employ experimental rather than action-based research designs, focusing more on older student populations and neglecting to explore the method's effects on motivation. Research consistently highlights that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are critical factors that influence reading engagement and comprehension (Nur, 2019; Wigfield et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the integration of the SQ3R method with Classroom Action Research (CAR) has not been thoroughly examined in the context of EFL education at the junior high school level. CAR enables iterative, reflective, and context-sensitive changes to instruction, making it an ideal framework for enhancing student engagement and comprehension(Aziz, 2020; Ritonga et al., 2021). The lack of research in this area highlights the necessity for a study that synergizes the adaptive, problem-solving characteristics of CAR with the structured, engaging principles inherent in the SQ3R method.

To address these gaps, this study aims to examine how the implementation of the SQ3R method through Classroom Action Research can enhance ninth-grade students' comprehension of procedural texts while simultaneously increasing their motivation to learn. The central research question driving this inquiry is: How can the SQ3R method improve ninth-grade students' motivation and reading comprehension of English procedural texts? This study aims to analyze both cognitive (comprehension) and affective (motivation) outcomes of utilizing the SQ3R method within a real-world classroom context.

The innovation of this research lies in its unique integrated focus on motivation, its application of CAR within a middle school setting, and its emphasis on procedural texts—an area that has not been exhaustively covered in previous studies (Nabilla & Hadi Asmara,

FOSTER JELT
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2022; Soleha, 2021). By incorporating established theories of motivation (Gardner, 1985; Wigfield et al., 2016) and effective language instruction principles (Brown, 2004), this study contributes a fresh perspective on EFL reading pedagogy while offering practical solutions for improving literacy outcomes in Indonesian educational contexts.

METHODS

The effectiveness of the SQ3R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) in improving reading comprehension and learning motivation among ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Rambang Niru during the 2024–2025 academic year was examined in this study using a Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology. CAR was selected because it combines systematic research with teaching practice, enabling teachers to directly address actual issues in their own classrooms through an iterative and reflective process. CAR enables instructors to be researchers who critically assess and improve their teaching methods, as Ritonga et al. (2021) clarify, stressing that "the key to implementing CAR is for educators to be willing to examine, contemplate, or review themselves". By creating a flexible learning environment that adapts to the demands of the classroom, this dual function promotes professional growth and raises educational standards.

Twenty-eight ninth-grade students from class IX.1 participated in the two-cycle study. Three meetings, each lasting 40 to 80 minutes, made up each cycle, providing the time to fully execute the SQ3R approach. The Kemmis and Taggart cyclical model, which has four crucial stages—planning, action, observation, and reflection—was used to organise the study (Nanda et al., 2021). By allowing the researcher to design interventions, implement them, track their impact on students' understanding and motivation, and evaluate the results to guide future steps, this cycle framework promoted continual progress. The study made sure that instructional strategies remained flexible and pertinent to the setting by basing changes on real-time classroom input.

The SQ3R approach was methodically used at each cycle to actively include pupils in the reading process. Students first skimmed the process documents for a broad overview before coming up with questions that directed their concentrated reading. Students then carefully studied the materials in search of solutions, recited important passages to help them remember them, and went over the material again to make sure they understood it. According to Sudarsono and Astutik (2024) , the SQ3R method's organized approach "actively involves students in the reading process, which can boost their motivation and interest in reading," underscoring its importance in fostering affective involvement as well as cognitive engagement. The selection of process texts was intentional and in line with the national curriculum since they offer logical, understandable frameworks that enhance understanding and inspire students by relating what they are learning to real-world situations. "The SQ3R method can improve students' reading skills and make the students dare to advance," according to Aziz (2020), who further supports this approach by highlighting the system's ability to develop competence and confidence.

In order to offer a comprehensive assessment of the intervention, data collecting used a mixed-methods strategy that combined quantitative evaluations with qualitative observations. Quantitative data were acquired by a 25-item multiple-choice reading

FOSTER JELT
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Vol.6, No. 3, July 2025
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***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

comprehension exam, created according to Bloom's taxonomy to measure various cognitive levels: literal, inferential, and evaluative understanding. This thorough testing made sure that gains were evaluated across a range of comprehension dimensions. Additionally, a five-point Likert scale was used to give a 20-item learning motivation questionnaire that was modified from Gardner's (1985) Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). It is crucial to record shifts in both effort and attitude towards learning English because, according to Gardner's (1985) framework, motivation is "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language." Systematic classroom observations were carried out in cooperation with an experienced peer teacher acting as an external observer to increase the validity and comprehensiveness of the results. In addition to reducing prejudice, this collaborative observation technique yielded deep qualitative insights into classroom dynamics, teacher implementation fidelity, and student involvement. Such cooperative observation "supports legitimate interpretation of students' behaviours and learning responses in a genuine classroom context," according to Abdullah Sani et al. (2018), guaranteeing that the qualitative data appropriately capture actual classroom interactions. Students' enthusiasm, active engagement during the SQ3R stages, and the teacher's teaching strategies were all thoroughly documented using observation checklists and narrative recordings.

A clear criterion was used to assess the intervention's effectiveness: in accordance with the school's Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM), at least 85% of pupils were required to pass the reading comprehension test with a minimum score of 65. Positive changes in questionnaire responses from one cycle to the next were used to measure motivation gains. This dual success metric emphasizes the crucial relationship between motivation and academic achievement, confirmed by Ahmadi (2017), who affirms that "motivated readers typically do better on reading comprehension assignments." Each cycle concluded with a reflection phase in which the researcher and observer together analyzed quantitative data and qualitative observations to determine the cycle's strengths, weaknesses, and required improvements.

In conclusion, this approach systematically improves reading comprehension and learning motivation by combining the structured, student-centered SQ3R strategy with the reflective, iterative design capabilities of CAR. The study guarantees a thorough, evidence-based strategy that is precisely suited to the educational context of ninth-grade students by utilizing combination-method data gathering and establishing explicit success criteria.

RESULTS

Using a Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology, this study examined how well the SQ3R method improved ninth-grade students' reading comprehension and motivation to learn. Reading comprehension assessments, motivation surveys, and methodical classroom observations were used to gather data, which allowed for a thorough assessment of the intervention's effects over the course of two research cycles.

With its 25 multiple-choice questions drawn from Barrett's taxonomy, the reading comprehension exam assessed students' literal, inferential, and evaluative skills. Only 64% of students in the first cycle achieved the required minimum passing score of 65, which

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Vol.6, No. 3, July 2025
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suggests that many students still found the reading materials challenging and found it difficult to completely apply the SQ3R method, especially when it came to the questioning and reciting phases. This preliminary result made clear the necessity of improving education to better enhance students' comprehension and involvement.

The second cycle showed significant improvement after making thoughtful modifications, such as improving the scaffolding of the SQ3R steps, placing more of an emphasis on active inquiry, and reinforcing practice during the recitation and review phases. The average comprehension score climbed dramatically, and 89% of students passed the reading test. More pupils showed mastery of higher-order cognitive abilities, such as drawing logical conclusions and critically assessing the material. This increasing trend supports earlier research showing the SQ3R technique has a beneficial impact on reading achievement and validates its effectiveness in promoting deeper comprehension.

After the second cycle, more students were clustered in the middle to high score brackets, while fewer students scored in the lowest ranges, according to an analysis of the score distribution. This change shows that the SQ3R technique assisted lower-performing students in catching up to their counterparts, suggesting both overall progress and a reduction in the understanding gap between students. These results support different learners in meeting basic competency criteria, which is in line with the educational objective of inclusion.

Gardner's (1985) Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was modified to create a 20-item questionnaire that was used to measure motivation, a crucial component of language acquisition success. Some students showed little interest and little involvement in reading assignments, indicating that their initial motivation levels were moderate in the first cycle. The second cycle, however, observed a notable increase in motivation following the incorporation of student feedback and the modification of teaching tactics, such as expanding chances for collaborative learning and emphasising the value of reading resources. About 85% of students said they were more eager, interested, and willing to actively participate in English reading activities. These conclusions were corroborated by observational data, which showed improved focus, involvement, and perseverance throughout classes. These findings highlight that motivated students typically attain higher comprehension outcomes, supporting the known link between motivation and reading achievement.

Observations in the classroom offered a useful window into the behavioural dynamics that went hand in hand with the quantifiable academic gains. Observations during the first cycle revealed a number of difficulties, such as students' unwillingness to participate fully in the Question and Recite phases, their propensity for off-task behaviour, and their dependence on instructor cues rather than their own ideas for questions or summaries. Despite its good intentions, teacher facilitation frequently focusses on directed instruction with little opportunity for student reflection or peer discussion.

On the other hand, findings from Cycle 2 demonstrated a noticeable improvement in student autonomy and interaction. Pupils seemed more comfortable asking and responding to questions, and they were better able to summarise literature without explicit instruction. In order to foster a positive and stimulating learning environment, the instructor used more facilitative techniques, such as promoting group discussions and offering helpful criticism

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Vol.6, No. 3, July 2025
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***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

during review sessions. This change was essential for maintaining motivation and improving understanding since it gave pupils a stronger sense of pride and accomplishment in their education.

Furthermore, the observational data showed that by the second cycle, students who had previously displayed lower levels of motivation and comprehension had undergone notable behavioural changes. These students showed greater perseverance in finishing reading assignments and engaged more actively in group projects, indicating that the SQ3R technique enhanced students' affective and behavioural engagement with learning in addition to their cognitive development.

Additionally, teacher perspectives showed that although incorporating the SQ3R method needed deliberate preparation and modification, it was eventually possible given the current curriculum and time restrictions. SQ3R's structured format gave teachers and pupils a clear road map, demythologising the reading process and making it more accessible for those who had previously been intimidated by long or difficult readings.

All things considered, the results of this study demonstrate the mutually reinforcing relationship among academic success, student motivation, and instructional technique. In order to show that systematic, student-centred interventions may result in significant gains in educational outcomes, the teacher-researcher used the cyclical CAR framework to iteratively modify teaching strategies based on tangible data and reflective practice.

DISCUSSION

According to the study's findings, ninth-grade students' reading comprehension and motivation significantly improved when the SQ3R method was applied within a Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework. The idea that active and structured reading techniques can change students' interaction with texts and result in quantifiable academic improvement is highly supported by these findings. The systematic approach of the SQ3R technique "actively involves students in the reading process," as stressed by Sudarsono & Astutik (2024). This enhances students' motivation and interest in reading in addition to improving comprehension. Students are encouraged to read more deeply and engage cognitively through this active engagement, which is crucial for comprehending complicated materials.

The significant increase in students' reading comprehension scores over the course of the two cycles demonstrates how well SQ3R fosters the development of a range of cognitive abilities. In the first cycle, just 64% of students met the minimum passing criterion, indicating little success. But thanks to CAR-supported reflective teaching techniques, instructional strategies were modified to better scaffold students' abilities, especially during the questioning and reciting stages, which resulted in a notable increase in passing rates to 89% in the second cycle. This result is consistent with Barrett's taxonomy, since students showed improved skills in textual interpretation, inference, and critical analysis (Krismadayanti & Zainil, 2022). This kind of gradual growth demonstrates SQ3R's potential for helping students who struggled at first as well as for advanced learners, thus fostering equity in learning outcomes.

According to the motivational theories covered in the thesis, motivation—a crucial component affecting reading achievement—showed a noticeable improvement in this study.

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Vol.6, No. 3, July 2025
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Following the intervention, students' intrinsic motivation to participate in English reading activities increased, according to the results of a questionnaire based on Gardner's (1985) Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). This increase is supported by the SQ3R technique, which gives pupils explicit instructions that promote independence and self-control. According to Nur (2019), reading comprehension performance is more dependent on intrinsic motivation—which is characterised by a person's own interest and fulfilment in learning—than extrinsic drive. By requiring active questioning and recitation, the SQ3R phases provide students agency over their education, meeting their demand for competence and boosting motivation in the process.

These improvements were made possible in large part by CAR's reflective method. According to Ritonga et al. (2021), CAR pushes teachers to evaluate their methods critically and make data-driven changes. The teacher in this study improved instructional strategies between cycles by incorporating more interactive discussions and giving clearer explanations of the SQ3R stages as a result of her reflective practice. The significance of CAR as a research technique and a professional development tool was demonstrated by the teacher's ability to effectively respond to student issues and modify ways to maximise engagement and comprehension through this iterative process.

Classroom observations offered qualitative information complementing the quantitative improvements. The reading strategy's initial efficacy was hampered by pupils' hesitation and dependence on instructor direction when asking questions and memorising. But in the second cycle, students were more self-assured and independent, actively creating questions, summarising materials, and participating in group discussions. This change is in line with the thesis, which emphasises active learning settings where students build knowledge independently and cooperatively, improving their cognitive and affective domains (Wigfield et al., 2016). As a result of these behavioural adjustments, students felt more capable and supported, which improved comprehension and maintained motivation.

The SQ3R method's success was greatly aided by the selection of procedure texts as the instructional resource. The clear and logical structure of procedure texts help students anticipate content and follow steps, which lessens cognitive overload and improves comprehension (Septiani & Safitri, 2021). By relating learning to well-known material and real-world applications, the use of texts that were in line with the national curriculum guaranteed relevance and applicability, inspiring students. Additionally, this alignment reinforced learning objectives and outcomes by assisting students in applying SQ3R strategies in a methodical manner.

Notwithstanding the encouraging outcomes, the study notes that applying the SQ3R technique and CAR in an actual classroom context presents difficulties. According to the thesis debate, several students initially had trouble coming up with good questions and summarising material, indicating that metacognitive techniques like SQ3R call for explicit teaching, repetition, and eventual internalisation. Additional difficulties included juggling curriculum demands and time limits, which highlighted the need for continued teacher development and institutional support to properly sustain such interventions.

Furthermore, in comparison to earlier teaching approaches, the SQ3R method's greater variety and engagement may be just as responsible for the motivating gains shown as its

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

Vol.6, No. 3, July 2025
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***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

structure. Reading became a more dynamic and pleasurable activity through active participation through inquiry, peer debate, and recitation. This reduced reading anxiety and promoted positive attitudes towards learning. For the development of linguistic proficiency and lifelong reading habits, this emotional involvement is essential.

In conclusion, the results of this study demonstrate that the SQ3R approach, when used in a reflective CAR framework, greatly improves ninth-grade students' reading comprehension and motivation to learn. A potent synergy that promotes meaningful learning experiences is produced when reflective teaching, active reading techniques, and proper text selection are combined. These results emphasise the value of reflective practice in teaching innovation and offer a solid empirical foundation for integrating SQ3R into secondary education curricula. To further evaluate and expand on these encouraging findings, future studies should examine the long-term impacts of SQ3R as well as its flexibility across a range of learners and topic areas.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the extent to which the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method could effectively enhance both reading comprehension and learning motivation among ninth-grade students, particularly in the context of procedural texts. The research, conducted through two cycles of Classroom Action Research (CAR), yielded compelling evidence of improvement in both domains. Quantitative data demonstrated a substantial increase in comprehension scores: the percentage of students meeting the minimum passing standard rose dramatically from 42.85% in the pre-cycle phase to 89.28% by the conclusion of Cycle II. This sharp increase indicates not only the cognitive benefits of the SQ3R method but also the effectiveness of its structured approach in helping students navigate and process procedural texts, which typically require a high level of sequential understanding and detail recognition.

Moreover, the study revealed parallel growth in students' motivational attitudes toward reading. Following the intervention, 85% of students reported high levels of interest, engagement, and willingness to participate in reading activities. Observational data and survey results further supported these findings, showing that learners became more proactive in classroom discussions, more persistent in completing reading tasks, and more confident in articulating their understanding of texts. These developments suggest that the SQ3R method not only supports cognitive engagement but also fosters emotional and motivational commitment to reading. The structured nature of SQ3R—beginning with text familiarization and leading to reflective review—appears to promote a sense of autonomy and purpose among learners, which is essential for sustained academic engagement.

Nevertheless, these promising outcomes should be interpreted with consideration for the study's inherent limitations. The research was conducted within a single institution and involved a relatively small cohort of 28 students from one classroom. Additionally, the study focused exclusively on procedural texts within a specific segment of the curriculum. As such, the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other types of texts, different age groups, or broader educational settings remains uncertain. Caution is advised in extrapolating the results beyond the studied context without further empirical validation.

FOSTER JELT
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Vol.6, No. 3, July 2025
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***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

Despite these limitations, the study offers a valuable contribution to the growing body of literature on strategic reading instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. It provides empirical support for the SQ3R method as a viable and impactful strategy for enhancing both the cognitive and affective dimensions of reading. Importantly, this research highlights the synergistic potential of combining structured reading strategies with reflective teaching practices such as CAR. Through its iterative cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection, CAR facilitated continuous instructional improvement, allowing the SQ3R method to be adapted and refined in response to student needs and classroom realities.

In conclusion, the findings of this study reinforce the argument that student-centered, strategy-based approaches—when integrated thoughtfully within reflective instructional models—can lead to significant gains in student learning outcomes. The dual improvement in comprehension and motivation underscores the necessity of addressing both what students learn and how they engage with learning. Future research is encouraged to build upon these findings by exploring the long-term impacts of SQ3R across diverse genres, age groups, and educational contexts, as well as examining how digital tools and blended learning environments might further enrich the application of this method in contemporary classrooms.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is strongly recommended that English language teachers adopt the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method in their instructional practices, particularly in reading lessons that involve procedural texts or other genres requiring logical sequencing and comprehension of complex structures. The structured, step-by-step nature of SQ3R not only supports students in developing a deeper understanding of the material but also fosters essential academic habits such as critical thinking, independent learning, and purposeful reading. Teachers are encouraged to integrate each phase of the method deliberately—helping students preview texts strategically, formulate meaningful questions, engage with content attentively, recite key points for internalization, and reflect systematically to reinforce comprehension.

Furthermore, the implementation of the SQ3R method has proven effective in enhancing student motivation and participation. Therefore, educators should consider incorporating it not only as a reading comprehension strategy but also as a tool for increasing learner engagement and classroom interaction. Professional development workshops and teacher training programs could be designed to familiarize instructors with the method's application and benefits, especially in EFL settings where reading can often be perceived as a challenging or disengaging task.

For future research, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted across a wider range of contexts, including different grade levels (e.g., primary or senior secondary), types of schools (e.g., public, private, or vocational institutions), and diverse geographical areas—both urban and rural. This would help to establish a broader understanding of the method's adaptability and effectiveness. Researchers are also encouraged to explore the

FOSTER JELT
Journal of English Language Teaching

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***p*-ISSN: 2776-8880**

long-term impact of SQ3R on students' reading development, retention of information, and transferability of reading strategies to other subjects and learning domains.

In addition, future investigations might examine the application of the SQ3R method to other genres beyond procedural texts. For instance, it would be valuable to analyze its effectiveness when applied to argumentative, narrative, expository, or descriptive texts, which pose different cognitive and linguistic demands. Understanding whether the SQ3R framework is equally effective across various textual forms would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of its pedagogical potential.

To enhance the methodological rigor and validity of subsequent studies, researchers are advised to employ mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative measures (e.g., test scores, questionnaire data) with qualitative insights (e.g., student interviews, classroom observations). Including a control group in the study design would also provide a stronger basis for comparison and help isolate the specific impact of the SQ3R method from other instructional variables.

With the growing integration of technology in education, especially in the wake of increased remote and hybrid learning environments, future studies should also explore how the SQ3R method can be adapted for digital or online platforms. Investigating the use of e-books, learning management systems (LMS), and SQ3R-based digital learning modules could provide insight into how the strategy functions in technology-enhanced contexts. This would help determine its applicability for 21st-century learners and ensure its relevance in an increasingly digital educational landscape.

Ultimately, by expanding the scope of inquiry and continuing to refine and contextualize the use of SQ3R, teachers and researchers alike can make meaningful contributions to improving literacy outcomes and student engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment. Supporting students in becoming more confident, autonomous, and strategic readers is a vital step toward equipping them with the academic skills necessary for lifelong learning and global communication.

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FOSTER JELT
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